

Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee 13th May 2024 Meeting Report

Date:	2 nd May 2024
Name:	Emma James

7. Simmons Park

7.1 To note the following updates:

- **Bookings** - Events that have either taken place or are scheduled to take place in Simmons Park, subject to receipt of the necessary paperwork.

Booking Name	Group Name	Start Date	End Date
OCRA Homeschooling	OCRA	Mon 11/09/2023 10:00	Mon 15/07/2024 15:00
Rowlands Fair	Anderton and Rowland Amusements	Sun 02/06/2024 00:00	Mon 10/06/2024 07:30
PTFA Circus	Okehampton Primary PTFA	Sun 16/06/2024 09:00	Mon 17/06/2024 16:15
Rotary Summer Fair	Rotary	Sun 04/08/2024 08:00	Sun 04/08/2024 18:00
Rowlands Fair	Anderton and Rowland Amusements	Sun 13/10/2024 00:00	Mon 21/10/2024 07:30

7.2 **Putting Improvements** – To consider the outcome of the S106 funding application, correspondence from members of the public and any action required.

The application for S106 funding has not been successful. A pre-application enquiry in relation to planning requirement has been made, the response is not clear, however it is likely that planning consent would be required.

The Committee is requested to consider its next action in relation to this potential project.

Correspondence has been received from members of the public both in favour and against the proposals. These are as follows:

I've just read the article in Oke Links regarding grant funding for the putting green and think it's an AMAZING idea. For context, I'm a [REDACTED] year-old bloke who has, since the first COVID lockdown, walked over 10,000 miles [REDACTED] in and around Okehampton [REDACTED], and have done my best to contribute as many of Okehampton's 'points of interest' into the game for the community to interact with.

With that said, I love the idea of turning some of Okehampton's iconic landmarks into unique holes, and having read about using the Castle, Town Hall etc., I figured I'd chuck a few ideas out there for individual holes if, by chance, funding was achieved and whoever was designing the course wanted some more ideas:

- The point of convergence of the East and West Ockment rivers behind Lidl - maybe in the shape of the beautiful bench that stood next to that point before it was so sadly vandalised?

- The Museum of Dartmoor Life - maybe something involving the iconic water wheel?
- The archway gates at the western entrances to Simmons Park
- The Three Little Pigs situated next to St. James Chapel
- St James Chapel itself, or All Saints Church
- Lesser known, but potentially the 3 statues sculpted by Alan Biggs of the Deer and Fawn (located in the park), Mother and Child (at Okehampton Hospital) and the Water Boy (by the West Ockment River, within view from next to Hospicecare)
- The 2 'Kissing' gates located by the southern entrance to Simmons Park and along the Castle Ham Trail
- The 2 murals located outside the old cinema and East Street
- The arcade
- Also lesser known, but the Okehampton Borough Boundary (OBB 1935) stones located along the towns boundary lines. Only 8 of the 11 appear to have been located but they're an amazing piece of Okehampton's history and would be a great to try to knock balls between/around!
<https://dartmooreexplorations.co.uk/okehampton-borough-bounds/>

Of course, I completely appreciate there will be budgetary and potentially skillset limitations to bringing some these to life, but Okehampton has such a wonderful history that a 9-hole course featuring iconic landmarks should be easy enough to source ideas for!

I am writing to you because I have heard some rumours circulating about potential plans for the green space outside the front entrance to Nibbles Cafe (located within Parklands Leisure Centre) that could impact not only the cafe, but our community as a whole

I am keenly interested in understanding and potentially contributing to any developments that could but more importantly, the area in question.

From what I have gathered, there may be discussions or proposals regarding a crazy golf facility being built on this green space. I have had the chance to observe how this space is currently being used and have had many conversations with parents who have expressed an interest in what they think could be created in this area. Given the cafe's ever growing popularity among families and other local residents, I believe that it is crucial for our voices to be heard and considered in these matters. A lot of parents who visit through the day have preschool aged children and therefore feel that more safe space and activities for them would be hugely beneficial. Ideas for how this area could be used include:

- * Sensory garden
- * Wooden educational nature trail which could include pictures and information about the park's flora and fauna
- * Bug hotel
- * Splash pool area
- * Maze
- * Giant sandpit
- * Snakes and ladders

* Safe and secure green area for picnics and free play

Two weeks ago when the sun finally came out on a Saturday, I had the pleasure of observing young families coming together to enjoy the space in question with children and their parents running around and playing together. This would be lost if crazy golf went ahead.

I am writing to request an opportunity to share my views, as well as those of other parents and visitors to the cafe, with the appropriate authorities or committees involved in these plans. It is important for all of us to ensure that any changes complement the existing community environment and benefit the local families who frequent this area.

I have just read the Oke Links article about changes to the putting green. After discussing this with my husband, we thought we would share our thoughts.

Is this to be developed as a crazy golf type venue? At first I thought that might be a bad idea but further thinking made me realise this would be ideal...but not a too ambitious one.

When we are away with the family, we always do a game or two of crazy golf, especially if there is no pitch and putt available. All three generations really love it .

I have just read the newsletter and I am disappointed that funding is being sought for a putting green either in Simmons Park, Meldon Dam and most ridiculously the Castle. I would prefer if funds were sought for improving drainage beyond the shelter on the mayor's walk so that ice does not form in the winter and installation of paths around the park that can be used in all weathers and all year round, especially the path around the play area to the entrance to the sports field, the path that runs from the sports field down to the car park at the entrance to the park, the path from the end bridge to the park entrance on the pleasure grounds side.

Also the path through Platt's Meadow and through the copse where the school expects the public to walk needs to be made suitable for all year round use and paid for by the school as currently most of the time it is too muddy to use unless wearing walking or Wellington boots.

7.3 Bandstand – To resolve if to apply for planning consent to place a ‘finial’ to the structure adjacent to Chalet Treloar.

Pre-application planning advice has been sought and the provision of a ‘finial’ will require planning consent due to the height, which will exceed 4m. The height of the top of the structure from ground level is 4m.

7.5 Cycling and Cycle Rack Provision – To consider correspondence from a member of the public in relation to cyclists in Simmons Park and note that DCC will be providing a free cycle rack.

Cycling is not permitted in Simmon’s Park but the notice informing people of this fact is tiny. Twice today cyclists came up behind me at speed in the park and if I had stepped to the side, to miss a puddle for example, I could have been injured.

7.6 Simmons Park Car Park – To consider correspondence from a member of the public in relation to parking permit provision

The Simmons Park Car Park is at the centre on many of Okehampton's most popular facilities including the park itself, Parklands Leisure Centre and Swimming Pool and the footpaths around Ball Hill and Tramlines Woods. The car park has always been a useful short term parking option for those enjoying these facilities.

Recently, the number of parking spaces available during term time week days seems to have reduced dramatically as more and more spaces are being treated as a long term (all day) car park by Season ticket holders. It seems to have become the norm that the car park is full to capacity on the mornings when Parklands have a busy class schedule.

I am sure that the situation will worsen further when the bowling season starts.

It would be a great shame if Okehampton's excellent facilities fell into disuse through lack of parking availability.

7.7 Nature Trail and Booklet – To consider the draft outline for the trail, wildlife boards and associated leaflet.

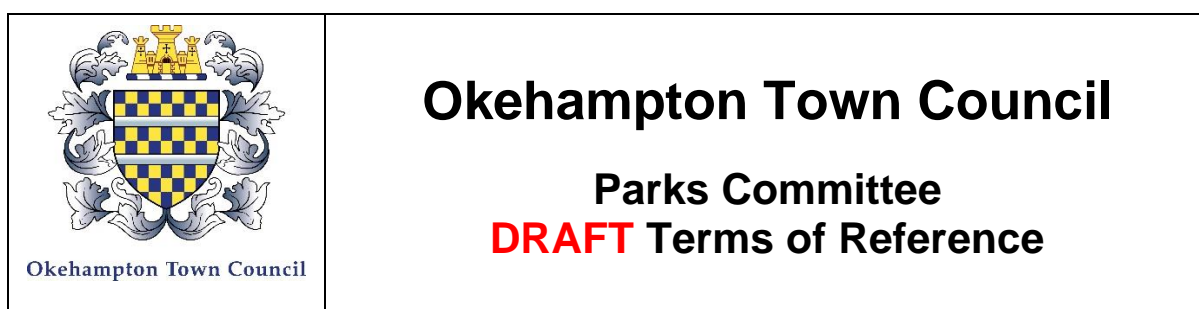
See separate document.

9. Cemetery

9.1 Burials - To note the summary of burials.

There will be a burial this week, the only one since the last meeting of the Committee .

12. Committee Terms of Reference – To consider and resolve to recommend the draft Terms of Reference to Full Council.



Responsibilities

To carry out the Council's responsibilities for the following:

- i. The provision of grounds maintenance services for:
 - a. Simmons Park, Kempley Meadows, Platt's Meadow, Putting Green;
 - b. Simmons Park car park and approach road;
 - c. Skate Park/BMX Track; Clapps Wood, Fairplace, land behind Lidl, grass verge at West Bridge, and all land in the ownership/responsibility of Okehampton Town Council (except the footprint of the Town Hall, Charter Hall, Cinema, Lower Market Hall and Public Toilets at Fairplace and in Market Street)
 - d. Land owned by others including the raised flower bed and seating area in New Road, the Gateway Mural area at the junction of East Street and Crediton Road and the planted area off the roundabout in School Way

- e. Cutting of the grass in the open Church owned Graveyard, adjacent to All Saints Church (no other responsibility for this service/facility); and
 - f. bus shelters x 3, some wayside seats and bins
- ii. The provision of grounds maintenance services within the Council owned Cemetery adjacent to All Saints Church and to act as Burial Authority for all burials and interments, including cremated remains, within the cemetery.

Budget

To have authority for spending within the allocated budget.

Fees

To determine and keep under review the fees and charges for the committee's services where statutory authority exists for the levying of such charges.

Payment of Expenses

To have authority to authorise cheque and BACS payments for all invoices and expenses.

